

REMARKS

Claims 28 and 15 have been amended above to overcome the examiner's objections. These claim changes are merely clarifications and are not intended to limit the scope of the claims.

Claims 11, 13 and 32 have been converted from dependent form into independent form. The claims have not been narrowed or limited by this amendment. In view of section 11 of the office action, these claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-2, 4-7, 9-10, 27-29, 31 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Taira et al. (US 6431762 B1). Claims 12 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Zimmer (US-2002/0181888 A1). Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Taira et al. (US 6431762 B1) in view of Lu. The examiner is requested to reconsider these rejections.

The examiner is requested to clarify the rejection of anticipation by Taira et al. (US 6431762 B1). The examiner cited 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Did the examiner intend to cite 35 U.S.C. 102(e)? Taira et al. (US 6431762 B1) issued on August 12, 2002 which is after the filing date of the present application; March 5, 2002. The examiner is also requested to clarify which "Lu" reference he is using in his obvious rejection (US 6471416 B2 or US 5692080).

The examiner stated that Taira's "sleeve holder 20" is actually two distinct parts, 24 and 25. The examiner has made

an error. As seen clearly in Fig. 3, the sleeve member 20 is a one piece member (note the single cross section). Fig. 13 also merely shows a one-piece member. "24" and "25" are portions of the sleeve holder. As noted on column 4, last line - column 5, line 1, the sleeve holder 20 is preferably formed by plastic molding. This all points to sleeve holder 20 being a one-piece member. Taira does not "anticipate" claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended above to clarify applicant's claimed invention. In particular, claim 1 claims a pair of separate latch inserts individually located in the at least one passageway. The combined features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the art or record. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Though dependent claims 2, 4-7, 9-10, 27 and 30 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Claim 12 has been amended above to clarify applicant's invention. In particular, claim 12 claims that each inner housing has a deflectable latch for locking the inner housing to the outer housing. Zimmer does not disclose or suggest inner housing halves 42, 44 that have a deflectable latch locking the inner housing halves to the main housing 12. The features of claim 12 are not disclosed or suggested in the art of record. Therefore, claim 12 is patentable and should be allowed.

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Reply to Office Action of: 10/15/2003

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicant's Attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Harrington 12/23/03
Mark F. Harrington (Reg. No. 31,686) Date

Customer No.: 29683
Harrington & Smith, LLP
4 Research Drive
Shelton, CT 06484-6212
203-925-9400

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